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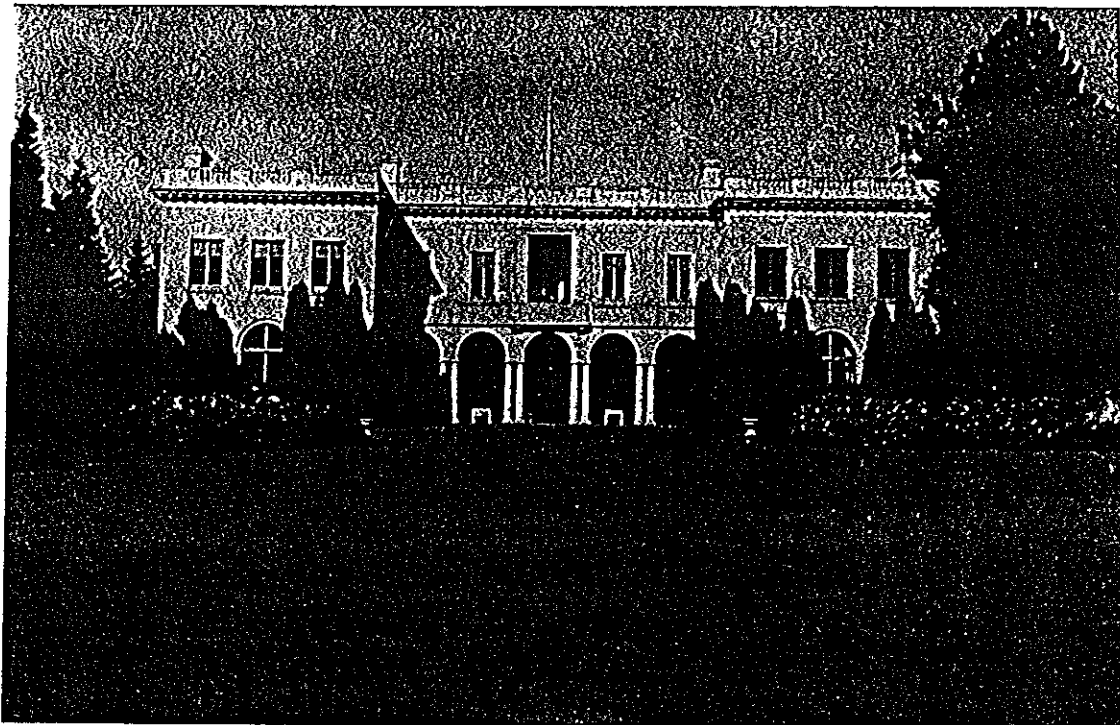
HISTORY, CHANGES and CURRENT CONDITIONS

of the

HISTORIC DESIGNED LANDSCAPE

at

LONG HILL ESTATE, MIDDLETOWN, CONNECTICUT



Prepared by Denig Design Associates, Inc.

with

To Design

May 14, 1996

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Prepared for the Long Hill Estate Stewardship Committee
and
the Municipal Development Office, Middletown, Connecticut

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE

This research has three purposes. Most importantly, it is to document the history, changes and current conditions of the landscape at Long Hill Estate, located in Middletown, Connecticut. Archival research, from local and national collections, will identify an assortment of information pertaining to this site. Collecting and analyzing the data will help to gain an understanding of the site's history and when changes may have occurred. Inventory and analysis of the existing conditions for the present site will show how much the landscape has changed since 1900. By evaluating the past and present conditions of the landscape, based on the aforementioned inventory and analyses, a picture of its history and the changes that have occurred will be documented, thereby aiding in the site's interpretation.

Secondly, this investigation is designed to assist in the interpretation of this historic designed landscape. Upon completion, this report will provide a better understanding of the landscape at Long Hill Estate. A necessary precursor for establishing an interpretation plan, it will support the preparation of an appropriate preservation and restoration plan.

Finally, this research sets forth the process for preparing a Master Plan for the preservation and restoration of Long Hill Estate. In 1994, the City of Middletown purchased the remaining 103.5 acre portion of Col. Clarence S. Wadsworth's estate, saving from eminent destruction. Wisely understanding the importance of this property and the site's connection to its own history and development, the City plans to preserve and restore the site within its present context and intended future uses. The Municipality plans to restore the historic building and its surrounding landscape and has established the property as a public park.

This research was funded by the Long Hill Estate Stewardship Committee through the Municipal Development Office of the City of Middletown, Connecticut. A grant was provided by The Rockfall Foundation in the belief that a better understanding of the history, changes and current conditions of this landscape will support the long range goals of the Committee by aiding the restoration of the most palatial country estate in Middletown, benefitting the City, its residents and the future visitors to this historic designed landscape.

B. SIGNIFICANCE

Long Hill Estate has both artistic and historical significance. It is a fine example of eclectic landscape design that is articulated well and associated with palatial country estates of the early twentieth century. The designers of Long Hill were an assemblage of three major personalities; Col. Clarence S. Wadsworth, a controlling individual who oversaw and directly influenced every designed improvement of his estate; the Olmsted Brothers of Brookline, Massachusetts, one of the largest and most influential landscape architecture firms of the early twentieth century; and Charles Wellford Leavitt, Jr., a little known but highly proficient landscape architect and civil engineer from New York City. Despite alterations in overall size and lack of maintenance, major features of the original landscape design remain intact, albeit in a deteriorated state.

The historical significance of Long Hill is directly related to Col. Wadsworth; the development of his estate in the Country Place Era as an eclectic landscape design; despite divided ownership, the integrity of the landscape that remains intact; and its recent establishment as a public park. (For a thorough discussion of the Long Hill Estate's artistic and historical significance, see the Historic Municipal Parks Survey prepared by this author, Appendix A.)

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II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A. COUNTRY PLACE ERA

In 1900, Clarence S. Wadsworth began preparing plans for the design and improvement of his country residence at Long Hill located in Middletown, Connecticut. With the professional guidance from architects and landscape architects, Wadsworth's estate became the most palatial in the city.

The design for the buildings and grounds at Long Hill embodied a debate between formal and informal principals, a major theoretical argument of the period, known as the "Country Place Era" and also "The Gilded Age." For many Americans, a new house in the country held the promise of instant cultural and social status. Between 1890 and the stock market crash of 1929, more people made more money than ever before. Of course social and cultural classes existed, even among the wealthy. Nonetheless, large country residences with their designed landscapes functioned as stage sets for the carefully plotted social lives of their owners, as well as bringing them into closer contact with the outdoors.

No country estate better exemplifies the Country Place Era than George Vanderbilt's, The Biltmore Estate, completed in 1895 and located in the picturesque setting of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Asheville, North Carolina. The Biltmore, considered the "blueprint" for country places of the next forty years, especially in the north, was Frederick Law Olmsted Sr.'s last commission. The eclectic style of landscape planning is articulated well as Olmsted integrates design elements from the sixteenth century French Formal style, the seventeenth century Italian style, and the pastoral and picturesque styles of the eighteenth and nineteenth century English romantic and natural era. The formality of Olmsted's design near the house, designed by Richard Morris Hunt, unfolds to an increasingly naturalistic and pastoral setting at the perimeter of the designed landscape.

While in a different social category than Vanderbilt, Wadsworth was a man of social means and of considerable wealth, maintaining seven houses including two in Middletown, Connecticut, and one in New York City, Bar Harbor, Chicago, Palm Beach and Bermuda. Presumably, Wadsworth was familiar with The Biltmore and other notable country estates as national publications featured these gardens almost without exception. Long Hill emulated the style and size of residences that were being built in Newport, Rhode Island, and other summer resort towns for the social elite, but without the expense. For example, Wadsworth constructed his house with reinforced concrete, a cutting edge, state-of-the-art technology that simulates the look and feel of stone. Even still, Long Hill was considered an estate compared to none in Middletown, Connecticut.

Many similarities exist between The Biltmore and Long Hill, none of which apparently are accidental. The owner of both estates hired architects that were trained in the classics at the

Ecole de Beaux Arts in Paris, France - Vanderbilt hired Richard Morris Hunt and Wadsworth hired Hoppin and Koen, New York City architects who had worked in McKim, Meade and White's office. Frederick Law Olmsted designed the landscape at The Biltmore while the Olmsted Brothers, Olmsted Sr.'s firm that continued after his death, worked on the design of the landscape at Long Hill. The first school of forestry in the United States was founded and the first comprehensive forest plan was put into effect at The Biltmore. Olmsted recruited Gifford Pinchot to setup and establish the forestry school as well as to supervise the reforestation of thousands acres of land of the estate. The Olmsted Brothers designed some reforestation efforts for Wadsworth on the western slope of Long Hill. Owing to the continuity in the carry-over within the Olmsted firm after Senior died, Wadsworth must have felt that he was duplicating Senior's design philosophy without actually having him do the design work. Wadsworth hired the largest and one of the most well renowned landscape architecture firms in the United States.

The similarities in the eclectic style of landscape planning at both estates is articulated well. Wadsworth matched the intent that the senior Olmsted had established as the standard to strive for in Asheville. At Long Hill, the foreboding task of blending the formality of an Academic Classical style house into a rural country setting was successfully accomplished. The landscape designers integrated the formal building and the informal site using an eclectic composition of landscape designs. Through the use of land form, plant materials, and built elements, such as walls, arches, and bridges, the designers ^{we} ^{make the} able to transition between the formality and symmetry of the sixteenth century French Formal style (allée and symmetrical drives); the architectural gardens, statuary, and hedges of the seventeenth century Italian style; and the pastoral and picturesque styles of the eighteenth and nineteenth century English romantic and natural era (winding Approach Drive and the integration of farm land into the estate). These individual styles and landscape features are combined to create a unified organization of outdoor space that connects the house with its surrounding landscape, and ~~vice~~ ^{vers} versa. The formality of the house gives way to a pastoral landscape setting. The similarities between the two estates was no accident, as these elements of design were typically incorporated into Country Place Era estates, begun at the Biltmore and utilized for the next forty years.

B. OWNERSHIP

Between 1900 and 1922, Wadsworth worked to improve and enlarge his property at Long Hill, which he enjoyed until his death in 1941. During his residency, Wadsworth purchased several pieces of land to increase the size of his estate to approximately 350 acres.

Wadsworth consulted with the Olmsted Brothers between November 1900 and February 1922 to help layout and design his landscape improvements. Their relationship was on-again off-again with a long period of layoff between April 1908 to April 1919. Much time was spent in the early years laying out access roads and designing tree plantations for the original house location atop

Long Hill. In 1907, Wadsworth moved the location of his house due to excessive and tiresome winds on Long Hill. Between then and 1917, the current house and immediate landscape was designed and constructed. The Olmsted Brothers credit Charles Wellford Leavitt, Jr., a New York City landscape architect and civil engineer, with the landscape design. They also indicate that Mrs. Wadsworth credits herself with all the work around the house. This commission was not easy for the Olmsted firm as Wadsworth was notorious for being a controlling individual who maintained a close and watchful eye on the development of his property. Suffice it to say that all final design decisions were influenced by Wadsworth himself.

In 1942, one year after Wadsworth died, the Rockfall Corporation, now the Rockfall Foundation, gifted 267 acres of land on the west side of Laurel Grove Road to the State of Connecticut for the creation of Wadsworth Falls State Park. Wadsworth established the Corporation in 1935 as a philanthropic, non-profit organization devoted to establishing and maintaining forests and open space properties, as well as but not limited to supporting active programs of environmental projects and grants.

Wadsworth's family maintained Long Hill until 1947, when it was sold to The Religion^{us} of Our Lady of The Cenacle, Inc., who expanded the house, divided off some land and maintained the grounds immediately about the house. One of the parcels that the Cenacle divided off was for the construction of Mercy High School, which shortened the length of the south lawn and its grand allée from approximately 1,300 feet to 750 feet long. Shortly thereafter they built the stone loggia at the terminus of the vista and placed within it a statue of the Virgin. The Cenacle added two wings to the building and built a parking lot in the vicinity of Wadsworth's nursery and greenhouses, thus removing them from the site and significantly altering its appearance.

In 1986, the Cenacle sold the remaining property to a developer who, in 1987, sold it to another developer that went bankrupt. Between 1987 and when the City of Middletown purchased the remaining estate in 1994, the house had been vandalized and several fires had been set. Fortunately, the building was constructed of reinforced concrete, which minimized the amount of fire damage.

C. CHARLES WELLFORD LEAVITT, Jr.

The Olmsted Brothers' correspondence and archival research suggests that Charles Wellford Leavitt, Jr. (1871-1928) was involved in laying out the grounds immediately around the house. Little is known about Leavitt, his connection with Wadsworth and his role in designing the landscape at Long Hill. It is possible that he and Wadsworth knew each other in New York City and were part of the same social circles. It also is possible that Wadsworth's architects, Hoppin and Koen also from New York City, recommended Leavitt for the project. Regardless, Leavitt did prepare several landscape studies for Long Hill as well as several detailed construction

drawings for Wadsworth's improvements of Long Lane (see Drawings, Plans and Other Maps herein for a detailed description of the drawings for which Leavitt is known to have prepared for Wadsworth).

Leavitt, born in Riverton, New Jersey, and graduated from Cheltenham (Pa.) Military Academy in 1888, began his professional work in civil engineering as an assistant of the East Jersey Water Company. In 1890 he served as assistant engineer and later chief engineer of the Caldwell Railway, now a part of the Erie system. He started his career as a landscape architect and engineer when he became chief engineer of the Borough of Essex Falls, New Jersey. From there he went to the Palisades Interstate Park Commission.

Among the more ambitious projects that he designed and supervised in construction were the Saratoga, Sheepshead Bay, Belmont, Toronto and Empire City race tracks; The Westchester Biltmore Country Club, the Rumson Country Club, Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Valhalla, New York, University of Georgia and the University of South Carolina.

He planned the development of the estates of William C. Whitney, Foxhall Keene, Daniel S. Hamont, Charles M. Schwab, and W.K. Jewett at Pasadena, California. Towns that he helped to plan include Camden, N.J.; Garden City, Long Island, New York; West Palm Beach, Florida.; Brunswick, Georgia.; Lakeland, Florida.; Mount Vernon, New York and Grand Marie, Manitoba, Canada.

Mr. Leavitt was a consulting landscape architect for the Board of Water Supply for New York City and for the North Jersey District Water Supply Commission. A member of the American Society of Civil Engineers, the American Society of Landscape Architects, The Architectural League of New York, the National Conference of City Planners in which he took a very active part and was a Past President of the American Institute of Consulting Engineers.

III. CHANGES in the LANDSCAPE

Vegetation is constantly in transition. It is dynamic, rather than static. Communities of plants replace one another over time in a process called succession. Successional growth is a relatively orderly and natural process where sparse growth of annuals transform into complex, thick and diverse groups of plants. While this natural process takes time, man can speed it along by introducing plant species that will develop into mature growth thereby restricting new or unwanted successional growth, especially when supported with regular maintenance. But the opposite also is true. Without regular maintenance successional change will occur in an ecosystem as competing plants respond to and alter the local environment. For instance, if farmland is abandoned, it will develop slowly over a period of time into a climax forest. The same holds true for designed gardens and the broader landscape.

The following are detailed descriptions of maps and slide traces of aerial photographs that document the appearance of Long Hill to the extent of the detail contained on each. Where appropriate, interpretations are made of the information and current conditions shown on each map, which is then compared to the other maps and ultimately to the site's current conditions (Spring 1996). This process will confirm the existence or disappearance of landscape features identified during archival research, as well as track the changes that occurred to the site and identify which features still exist from Wadsworth's original historic designed landscape.

A. January 1901

In January 1901, Gordon H. Taylor prepared a map entitled "Topographical Map of a portion of the C.S. Wadsworth Estate, Long Hill, Middletown, Connecticut." Located in the archives of The Rockfall Foundation, this map shows how the site appeared before Wadsworth began constructing his country estate. (See Appendix B.)

Taylor's map is quite detailed, showing topographical contours at 5 foot intervals, the location of Dolly Lane and the noted condition and vegetative cover of the entire parcel. To the west of Dolly Lane there was a grass lot, two pastures, a large peach orchard, a small pond and a variety of tree and brush covered areas noted as containing white and black birch, maple, chestnut, ash, hickory, white oak, cedar, apple, elm, alder and hornbeam. To the east of Dolly Lane there were two cultivated fields, five pastures, two old pastures with scattered brush and young cedar, a peach orchard, an apple orchard, a grass lot and a forested area with all the trees identified. The variety of trees is similar to the west side of the Lane. Taylor also noted two houses, stone walls, old fences, old paths, property lines, drainage channel, springs, and wet areas about the property.

Long Hill was mostly open except for the fruit trees and the forested area located on its north slope and continuing halfway to Middlefield Road, now Wadsworth Street. North of the wooded area is an old pasture transitioning through succession.

Taylor provides enough detail to identify several items that exist today on the site including the pond, the 28" [White] ash tree between the pond and Dolly Lane, the northern portion of Dolly Lane and the stone walls that lined the southern section of Dolly Lane. No doubt other elements still exist from 1901, which will be identified when future site-specific research is undertaken.

B. December 1901

The Olmsted Brothers prepared a preliminary plan for the Wadsworth estate entitled "C.S. Wadsworth, Esq., Middletown, Conn., Preliminary Plan," dated December 23, 1901, and identified as Plan 37 (see Appendix C). At this time, Wadsworth was planning to locate his residence at the southern crest of Long Hill. The plan, which was not implemented, is quite detailed and shows the house surrounded with formal gardens and approached by tree lined drives. All the roads and path are labeled, some of which exist today. Locations for forest plantations and pastures are indicated. The southern section of Dolly Lane is moved to the base of Long Hill and two gates are shown.

Portions of this plan's design intentions were implemented even though Wadsworth moved the location for constructing his house to the small rise west of Long Hill. Remnants of roads that can be found on-site today include: Old and New Dolly Lane; the southern section of West Bourne Road; and sections of Ridge Road, the Main Approach Road and the east-west service road. Proposed in this plan was a road lined both sides with oaks trees and an approach drive immediately in front of the house lined both sides with smaller trees, possible evergreen trees or shrubs, both of which are landscape features in Wadsworth's estate. The Olmsted's suggested service drives accessing the house from both the east and west, which is precisely how they approach the house today. Also indicated is a tower terrace, located in the approximate location of Wadsworth's Summit Reservoir with pergola. Forest plantations suggested by the Olmsted firm that exist today are found west of West Bourne Road and along the steep, western slope on Long Hill east of New Dolly Lane. Design features, typical of the period, that exist on today's site include the tennis court, the two corbel arch gates, Middle Lane Pond and direct access from the site to Potter Lane, via the service road.

This plan is critical because of the many features that were implemented at a later time by Wadsworth, either directly or with similar design intentions. Also, the Olmsted Brothers' correspondence from this time period discusses the plan and explains why they made such recommendations.

C. 1908

After major construction, site improvements and property acquisitions, Taylor prepared another detailed survey of Wadsworth property entitled "Topographical Survey of the C.S. Wadsworth Estate, Middletown and Middlefield, Connecticut," dated 1908. Within seven years, Wadsworth had transformed his country property into a palatial estate. The detail of this map shows the house, approach and access roads, the grand south lawn, utilities and the changes in the vegetation. (See Appendix D.)

A closer look reveals notations that Taylor made regarding specific plantings. Many changes in the landscape are noticed especially when compared to the 1901 survey, historic photographs and the archival research. To the southwest of the house is an enclosed garden with a depressed circular bed and four formal beds presumed to be seasonal cutting gardens, also enclosed with an evergreen hedge. To the north west of the house are ~~several~~ ^{new} out-buildings including a greenhouse, around the nursery that Wadsworth established to cultivate stock for his forestry activities. The southern portion of Dolly Lane, starting at the pond, was moved to the foot of Long Hill as suggested by the Olmsted firm. Wadsworth planted a row of Lombardy Poplars along the west side of New Dolly Lane. The stone walls that lined both sides of the old Lane can still be found on-site today.

It is believed that Wadsworth's first reforestation plantings were along the steep western slope on Long Hill. The Olmsted correspondence provides a plant list for Plan 16 (see Appendix E). Noted on the list is the ordered and expected delivery dates. The correspondence also indicates that delivery was made and that some plants were missing. This is the only Olmsted planting that is confirmed to have been installed.

Several other notations on Taylor's map indicate that Wadsworth aggressively was changing the appearance of his property. There are many new roadside plantings, the west peach orchard was removed, the top and upper slope on Long Hill was planted with rue, pine, birch, maple, hemlock, and chestnut trees. Also indicated is remnants of the old Main Approach Drive, constructed as part of the Olmsted plan (1901) for the original house location atop Long Hill. The south lawn, approximately 1,300 feet long, is established with the suggestion of its allée plantings that exist today. The lawn tennis court and accompanying tennis house with screen/fence are shown along with the beginning of a plantation to the south and east.

Noticeably missing on this map is any indication of the formal plantings along the approach and access roads north of the house ie, the White Oak allée along the double stone wall, curving section of the Approach Drive and the formal arborvitae hedge lining both sides of the Access Road. Also missing is any indication of the pine, hemlock, spruce and cypress trees planted in the circular drop-off area directly in front of the house.

D. 1932/4

Historic aerial photographs provide a snapshot glimpse into the past. 1932 and 1934 aerial photographs, located at The Rockfall Foundation, show how Wadsworth's maturing estate looked several years after its completion. Such photographs do not have labels like Taylor's map have, but they do show buildings, roads, walks, mass grouping and individual deciduous and evergreen trees, water, open fields, scrub or scattered growth etc. A map created from these aerial photographs (see Appendix F) show how the site looked in "line" format for comparing to Taylor's maps, also line drawings.

Wadsworth's re-forestation plantings have matured and are seen quite easily. Long Hill is heavily forested with evergreens dominating the ridge and sides and deciduous trees extending north into the forested area dating back to 1901. The pastures north of the original forest have filled in, either by Wadsworth or through natural succession. The "landscape plantation" between West Bourne Road and Laurel Grove Road has clear distinctions between evergreen trees, deciduous trees and open lawn areas.

7. Areas between the house and halfway to Wadsworth Street are completely filled in with trees within halfway to Wadsworth Street. Evergreen trees completely surround the nursery and looped drop-off, lined both side of the North Fork, and are definitely mass planted beyond the arborvitae alleé along the North Fork. Deciduous trees fill in around the evergreens, suggesting that Wadsworth planted this entire area. The old pastures are gone between Laurel Grove Road and Old Dolly Lane. Interestingly, Colgrove's apple orchard, which appears on Taylor's 1908 survey remains. The White Oak alleé, which existed in an 1922 Olmsted plan remains and appears mature. The original location for the southern section of Old Dolly Lane still is discernable by rows of evergreen trees. The evergreen trees lining the south lawn and those south of the tennis court are maturing.

Portions of three roads on Long Hill are visible; Ridge Road, the Main Approach Drive and the service drive leading northeast toward the pond. The formal and cutting gardens near the house still exist along with several out-buildings between the house and the nursery.

Wadsworth's plan to create his palatial country estate with appropriately landscaped grounds appears to be doing well. No doubt he is proud of his work and that which he has created.

E. 1990

The 1990 aerial photograph, provided by the City of Middletown's Municipal Development Office, clearly shows that major changes occurred to Wadsworth's estate since the previous

photograph was taken, ca. 1932/4. A "line" drawing also was prepared from this photograph for comparison purposes (see Appendix G).

The single largest change that is evident is the amount of land that has been broken off from the original 350± acre estate. In 1942, Wadsworth's family gifted 247 acres to the state for the creation of Wadsworth Falls State Park. Five years latter, they sold the remaining estate east of Laurel Grove Road to the Religion of Our Lady of The Cenacle, Inc., who in turn sold several parcels of land, two of which now contain the Wilbert Snow School and the Mercy High School.

Landscape features noticeably missing in this photograph is the northern section of Old Dolly Lane, Wadsworth's nursery and associated out-buildings, the formal and cutting gardens, the open fields and the grand allée at the south lawn is now approximately 750' feet long, instead of 1,300 feet. Other features obscured by mature growth are the front looped drop-off road, the service drive to Laurel Grove Road and the evergreen allée along the North Fork. Appearing for the first time is an allée of mature Sugar Maple trees along the North Fork, a stone loggia that the Cenacle built for a statue of the Virgin at the terminus of the shortened south lawn, a parking area where the nursery was and two recently added wings to the buildings.

Changes in the vegetation cover due to successional growth, the hurricane of 1938 and logging by the Cenacle are evident. The large areas of evergreen re-forestation described in the 1932/4 photograph have been reduced in size and are now hardwoods. The open fields along the northern section of the North Fork and east of the south lawn also have filled in with deciduous trees. Landscape plantations between West Bourne Road and Laurel Grove Road are almost completely evergreen trees with the exception of small areas of deciduous trees.

Landscape features that are evident in this photograph include remnants of the old roads on Long Hill, West Bourne Road, the south lawn, the White Oak allée and its double stone walls, the tennis house and an open area for the tennis court, the pond and parts of Dolly Lane. Considering the divided ownership of this land since Wadsworth's time, it seems amazing that anything from his landscape design remains.

F. 1995

In March of 1995, Bruce Spaman of Forest Management Services located in Middletown, Connecticut, prepared two maps of the site entitled "Map of Formal Plantings & Notable Trees Located on the Long Hill Estate, Property of the City of Middletown" and "Vegetative Cover Type Map for the Forested Portion of Long Hill Estate, Property of the City of Middletown" (see Appendix G). Bruce prepared these maps after conducting visual on-site surveys using a 200' grid and identifying specific trees and masses of trees about the site.

These maps are important because they illustrate specific and unique vegetation. The former map documents the formal plantings, which includes the four alleés (the maple and arborvitaes along the North Fork, the White Oaks between the double stone walls and the south lawn), a planting that resembles the remains of a nursery due east of the stone loggia, and the evergreen screens around the house. The importance of identifying notable trees helps to document unusual or large trees that are uncommon in this region, such as American Chestnut, Black Walnut and oversized White Oaks and White Ash trees, both of which predate Wadsworth's involvement. The spacing and sporadic nature of the notable trees suggest that they were planted rather than seeding themselves, such as the corktree, Sweetgum, Japanese and Striped Maples, beeches and Oriental Spruce.

The Vegetative Cover Type Map is important because it labels the groupings of trees that were identified in the 1990 aerial photograph. The interpretation of this map and the field conditions from which it is derived help to suggest areas planted by Wadsworth, the Cenacle and by natural succession. Without documentation supporting an installed planting design from the site's owners, it is difficult to confirm who planted which trees. Although areas such as the White Pine Plantation that gives way to the White Oak Plantation, north of the parking area, were most definitely planted by Wadsworth, transitional areas and the remnants of garden plantings are more difficult to suggest who installed them.

IV. CONCLUSION

In America, magnificent estates were designed and constructed during the "Country Place Era," a time of great wealth and opulence for many people. Most of the estates that have survived are now owned by public municipalities and not-for-profit organizations simply because of their high cost of maintenance and repairs. Fortunately, Long Hill Estate followed suit with its purchase by the Cenacle and then by the City of Middletown, Connecticut, saving it from eminent destruction.

Wadsworth spent approximately 22 years designing, building and improving his country residence and another 20 years enjoying his labors. With the professional help of highly trained architects, landscape architects and civil engineers, as well as his own persistence and influence, he transformed a mostly open, agricultural piece of land into Middletown's most palatial "Gilded Age" estate. He utilized the period's major principals of design in laying out his property, many of which were popularized by Frederick Law Olmsted at the Biltmore in Asheville, North Carolina. Wadsworth considered himself a "society man" and therefore built an estate that he felt rivaled those being constructed in Newport, Rhode Island, and other summer resort towns of the social elite.

Even though much has happened to the estate since Wadsworth's time, such as divided ownership, reduction in acreage and lack of maintenance, many of the elements and features of its original landscape design can still be found on the remaining portion of his property. There is enough evidence and significance in the remains at this site to justify additional research and the preparation and implementation of a master plan for the preservation and restoration of this historic designed landscape. Such work would support Wadsworth's efforts and philanthropic ideals, the goals of the Long Hill Estate Stewardship Committee, as well as the present and future needs of Middletown's residents.

V. CHRONOLOGICAL TIME-LINE

- 1675 Long Hill was first settled by the Hubbard Family - Wadsworth's wife's family. It was mostly wooded with small patches cleared off by the Indians for growing corn.
- 1818 Henry L. deKoven, Wadsworth's grandfather, bought the deKoven House
- Nov. 1865 A new road was laid out in Long Hill, possibly this was "Dolly Lane"
- Oct. 1866 Francis L.V. Hoppin, future architect, was born
- 1871 Charles Wellford Leavitt, Jr., future landscape architect and civil engineer, was born
- August 1871 Clarence S. Wadsworth was born
- 1892 Wadsworth entered Harvard
- 1896 Wadsworth graduated from Harvard
- 1897 Wadsworth married Katherine Fearing Hubbard in Holy Trinity Church in Middletown, Connecticut.
- Sept. 1898 Wadsworth's first son, Seymour, was born
- 1899 Wadsworth graduated from Harvard Law School and entered the Bar
- 1900-1907 Wadsworth began a 22-year, on-again off-again professional relationship with the Olmsted Brothers, a renowned landscape architecture firm from Brookline, Massachusetts
- Dec. 1900 Olmsted office recommended:
- carriages approach the residence from the north;
- leave the southern lawn unbroken and free from intrusion of visitors and others driving to the house;
- formal entry drive approaching the house should be lined with an avenue of trees (they hinted at Elms); and
- construct a "Greek Temple or something with architectural character to form a vista point" south of house.
- 1901 Wadsworth purchased 120 acres and began his forestry activities

- March 1901 First mention in Olmsted correspondence of a roadway with double stone walls
- May 1901 Olmsted correspondence indicates that "all plants have arrived," except ^{Acer?} ~~Acre~~ pennsylvatica/ Stripped Maple and Ostrya virginica/Hop Hornbeam. These plants appear to be those indicated on the handwritten planting list prepared by the Olmsted Brothers on March 19, 1901, for Plan 16 entitled "C.S. Wadsworth, Esq., Plan Showing Planting on Portion of Steep Slope/West of Proposed House Site" - the west hillside on Long Hill. The plants were ordered on March 22, 1901 and scheduled to arrive on April 22, 1901.
- Oct. 1901 Olmsted Brothers show double row of Oak trees along both sides of approach drive from the house site north.
- Nov. 1901 Middletown's Board of Selectmen voted to discontinue "Dolly Lane" "as a highway of the town from after this date."
- May 1902 Wadsworth's second son, Julius, was born
- 1903 White Oak side road planting
Paper Birch and White Pine shelterbelt planted on Long Hill
- 1905 White Pine plantation planted
- 1907 Wadsworth moved the location of his house due to "excessive and tiresome winds" atop Long Hill
- July 1907 Olmsted correspondence indicates that "a small gang of men were cutting and grubbing up old peach trees" on a low ridge in the western part of the farm
- 1908 Dennis O'Brien, Builder, contracted with Wadsworth to build the mansion for \$90,000 - foundation was poured
- 1908-1919 Landscape immediately surrounding the house was designed and built. The Olmsted office credits Charles Wellford Leavitt, a landscape architect and civil engineer, with the work
- July 1910 Middletown's Board of Selectmen accept Wadsworth's proposal to widen Long Lane by constructing two parallel dirt roads with walks in accordance to the plans prepared by Charles Wellford Leavitt, Jr., Civil Engineer
- 1911-1912 Olmsted office indicates that Wadsworth improved Long Lane

- March 1917 Wadsworth "tendered his palatial residence to the Red Cross to be used as a hospital and training school in the event of war"(WWI)
- 1919-1922 Olmsted office commented on the landscape design and improvements around the house and prepared construction documents for the Approach Drive from Long Lane to the existing drive.
- May 1919 Olmsted office indicated that Mrs. Wadsworth said she was responsible for all the work around the house, which they state "looks pretty ragged and unfinished."
Olmsted office recommended:
- terminating the vista of the south lawn "with a concrete loggia or wall of sufficient size;"
- developing a recreation building in the vicinity of the tennis court;
- a vegetable garden south or southeast of the tennis court; and
- the flowers and pleasure gardens immediately west and southwest of the house.
- 1922 Approach Drive was built
- 1928 Charles Wellford Leavitt, Jr., died
- 1935 Wadsworth established The Rockfall Corporation, now The Rockfall Foundation, as a philanthropic, non-profit organization devoted to establishing and maintaining forests and open space properties, as well as but limited to supporting active programs of environmental projects and grants
- 1936-1938 Wadsworth corresponded with William Sumner Appleton, founder of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities. Appleton recommended that Wadsworth turn over his property to the State of Connecticut or the Town of Middletown for a state forest/park, both would be "quite possibly...inferior to such an institution as Wesleyan"
- Oct. 1938 Appleton visit Wadsworth and Long Hill for an extended weekend
- 1938 Hurricane destroyed approximately 75,000 board feet of hickory and maple - a great loss of lumber to the estate
- 1941 Col. Clarence S. Wadsworth died
- 1942 267 acres of land were gifted to the State of Connecticut by the Rockfall Corporation for the creation of Wadsworth Falls State Park - 147 acres in the Town of Middletown and 120 acres in the Town of Middlefield

- May 1947 The Religion^{us} of Our Lady of The Cenacle purchased the Estate from Wadsworth's family
- Dec. 1986 The Religion^{us} of Our Lady of The Cenacle sold the property to a developer who, in 1987, sold it to another developer that went bankrupt
- 1987-1994 House was vandalized and several fires were set
- 1994 City of Middletown, Connecticut purchased 103.5 acres to preserve the remaining portion of the Estate. The City removed the two building wings added by the Cenacle and began implementing a forest management and clean-up program under the watchful eye of Bruce Spanan, a forester and private consultant, of Forest Management Services, Middletown, Connecticut
- March 1995 Bruce Spanan documents the vegetative cover types, formal plantings and notable trees in map format

VI. DRAWINGS, PLANS and OTHER MAPS

The Rockfall Foundation located in Middletown, Connecticut, and the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site located in Brookline, Massachusetts, provided copies of maps prepared for C.S. Wadsworth's Long Hill Estate. In 1935, Wadsworth established The Rockfall Corporation, now called the Rockfall Foundation. After his death, his files were stored in trunks in the attic of the deKoven House. These files recently were found and indexed, making it possible for researchers to quickly review the contents of their archives. The Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site is the original location of the Olmsted office. Most of the drawings found in the files at the office have been indexed and are available to review. The correspondence for the office is located at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., and are available on microfilm through inter-library loan.

The archives at both facilities were researched and the Olmsted correspondence for Long Hill Estate was read to gain an understanding not only of the material itself but to try to identify how the site was improved and which maps actually were implemented. This information proved helpful in piecing together the improvements of the landscape at Long Hill, even though several drawings were identified but not found.

Two landscape architects are known to have prepared drawings for Wadsworth, the Olmsted Brothers firm and Charles Wellford Leavitt. The Olmsted Brothers consulted with Wadsworth between 1900 and 1922, with a long period of layoff between April 1908 and February 1919. It was at this time that the residence and immediate surrounding landscape was designed and constructed. This is unfortunate because their archives are very thorough and easily accessible to researchers and this is the critical period of construction. The firm prepared 64 plans for Wadsworth, of which 16 plans are located at the Olmsted archives (see Appendix I for the Olmsted Plans Index Card File and the draft inventory of plans and drawings).

Charles Wellford Leavitt, Jr., a landscape architect and civil engineer from New York City, is credited, along with Mrs. Wadsworth, in the Olmsted Brothers' correspondence as having designed the grounds surrounding the house. While this cannot be accurately confirmed or denied because his office records have not been located, references to his working for Wadsworth have been found, confirming his involvement at Long Hill and at Long Lane. At the outset of this research, Leavitt was considered to have played a critical role in the design and development of Long Hill, but there was little proof. The list of maps that follow confirms his detailed involvement in landscape studies of Long Hill, for which he prepared several drawings indicating an on-going professional relationship with Wadsworth.

The following lists of drawings and plans prepared by Charles Wellford Leavitt, Jr. for C. S. Wadsworth was found in the archives at The Rockfall Foundation (see Appendix J for the "Plan Index; C.S. Wadsworth's Map File"). While this index identifies the drawings that were prepared

for Wadsworth, it does not indicate which maps were implemented nor does it indicate the present location of these maps. However, it does confirm the existence of these maps and that Wadsworth kept a meticulous filing system. The maps prepared by Leavitt include:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Subject (as noted by Wadsworth)</u>
Feb. 1910	Roadway into Estate connecting with Long Lane
May 1910	Planting Scheme (Long Lane)

The Rockfall Foundation also has map references and map indexes for the "Foster Map File" and the "Taylor Map File." Presently, it is unclear who Foster was and how he was connected to Wadsworth. Gordon H. Taylor was a Civil Engineer from Boston, Massachusetts and Yonkers, New York. It is possible that he was recommended by the Olmsted Brothers. Within these indexes are references of additional drawings that Leavitt prepared for Wadsworth on a variety of subjects. Unfortunately, the dates for these maps were not included in these indexes.

The Foster Map File

<u>Map Ref. #</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Subject</u>
MF 33U M13	Long Lane	Planting area near Middlefield Road
MF 33L M1	Long Lane	Topography
MF 33I M14	Long Lane	Profile at entrance to Industrial School
MF 55U M13	Long Lane	Profiles and sections
MF 55L M8	Long Lane	Grading embankment at Middlefield Road
MF 75 M5	Long Lane	Near City line
MF 95 M8	Long Hill	Landscape studies
MF 95 M11	Long Lane	Approach drive to house
MF 95 M16	Long Hill	Landscape studies, incomplete
MF 95 M17		Railing design at entrance
MF 115 M9	Long Hill	Landscape studies

The Taylor Map File

MT 55 DrO M1	Long Lane	Extension through school land
MT 55 Dr1 M2	Long Lane	Trees at Carver property
MT 55 Dr1 M3	Long Lane	Circular drive at industrial farm house
MT 55 Dr1 M4	Long Lane	Tree holes and planting areas
MT 55 Dr1 M6	Long Lane	Road arrangement
MT 95 Dr6 M6	Long Hill	Topographical plans

It is not surprising that Wadsworth consulted with the Olmsted Brothers, as their office was one of the largest and most well-respected landscape architecture firms in the country. Leavitt was a well-respected New York City landscape architect and civil engineer, who quite possibly was recommended by the architects, Hoppin and Koen, also of New York City. However, it is unclear whether Hoppin and Koen had worked with Leavitt before Long Hill, but surely the opportunity existed.

Two maps that have proven particularly helpful in documenting the early changes in the landscape at Long Hill are a 1901 topographical plan by Gordon H. Taylor and a 1908 topographical survey, also by Taylor. Both maps were found in The Rockfall Foundation's archives. The 1901 plan is important because it documents the appearance, vegetation cover, topography and boundary of the Estate before Wadsworth began his improvements. The 1908 survey identifies the changes that occurred in the previous seven years. The changes are significant and clearly identifiable. Taylor's plans include:

"Topographical Plan of a Portion of the C.S. Wadsworth Estate, Long Hill, Middletown, Conn., Jan. 1901, Gordon H. Taylor, C.E., Boston, Mass."

"Topographical Survey of the C.S. Wadsworth Estate, Middletown and Middlefield, Connecticut, Surveyed and Compiled 1908, Gordon H. Taylor, Yonkers, N.Y."

Other maps that supported this research include:

"C.S. Wadsworth, Esq., Middletown, Conn., Preliminary Plan," by the Olmsted Brothers, Landscape Architects, Brookline, Mass., dated December 23, 1901, Plan number 37;

"Map of Formal Plantings & Notable Trees Located on the Long Hill Estate Property of the City of Middletown," by Bruce Spaman, Forest Management Services, Middletown, Connecticut, dated March 1995;

"Vegetative Cover Type Map for the Forested Portion of Long Hill Estate Property of the City of Middletown," by Bruce Spaman, Forest Management Services, Middletown, Connecticut, dated March 1995;

"Long Hill Estate, Home of Col. Clarence S. Wadsworth, 421 Wadsworth Street, Middletown, Connecticut," by Denig Design Associates, Inc., dated May 14, 1996 - a slide trace of a 1990 aerial photograph courtesy of The Rockfall Foundation, Middletown, Connecticut; and

"Long Hill Estate, Former Home of Col. Clarence S. Wadsworth, 421 Wadsworth Street, Middletown, Connecticut," by Denig Design Associates, Inc., dated May 14, 1996 - a

slide trace of a 1990 aerial photograph courtesy of the Municipal Development Office of the City of Middletown, Connecticut.

(See Appendices B-D and F-H for photographically reduced copies of these maps.)

VII. PHOTOGRAPHIC ESSAY

VIII. ROADS IN and AROUND LONG HILL ESTATE

The name, location and number of roads in and around Long Hill Estate have changed significantly since Col. C.S. Wadsworth first became involved at the site. This section of the report tries to answer the question: What are the different names and locations for the various roads in and around Long Hill?

For simplification purposes, the Long Hill Estate site is described as that portion of Wadsworth's estate that the City of Middletown purchased in 1994.

Wadsworth Street, along the northern boundary of the property, used to be called **Middlefield Road**.

Laurel Grove Road, along the eastern boundary of the estate, appears to maintain its original name.

Randolph Road, along the southern boundary of Mercy High School, was also known as **Thwart Lane** and the **East-West Highway**.

Long Lane, running along the western boundary of Wadsworth original estate, was called **Babcock Street**.

Historic **Dolly Lane**, which runs through the estate, was known in the pre-Revolutionary period as "**The Path**." Locally it has been called **Dolly Path** because of "Aunt Dolly" whose cottage stood at the southeast corner of the junction of "**The Path**" and Wadsworth Street. Since Wadsworth's time, it has been known as **Old Dolly Lane** and **New Dolly Lane**. The change occurred when Wadsworth relocated the southern portion of Dolly Lane, from the pond south. This relocated section, known as **New Dolly Lane**, was moved eastward to the base of Long Hill. Parallel stone walls identifying the old roads' previous location still remain. **Old Dolly Lane** is the northern portion, which Wadsworth did not relocate.

White Oak Allée is the curving portion of the **Entry Drive** or **Approach Drive** that runs east-west between Dolly Lane and the **North Fork**. It is symmetrically designed with an allée of White Oak trees and a stone wall on either side.

The **North Fork** runs almost due north and connects the residence to Wadsworth Street.

The 1921-2 **Entry Drive** or **Approach Drive** that was designed by the Olmsted office provided access into the estate from the junction of Wadsworth Street and Long Lane.

Throughout the first seven years of the Olmsted Brothers involvement at Long Hill their correspondence refers to internal drives and roads that were site-specific. These roads did not go beyond the site and many were paper drives and roads because the location of the residence was moved in 1907. The 1901 Preliminary Plan of the Estate prepared by the Olmsted office, Plan number 37, is used to clarify the names and locations of these "ways."

The **North Approach Drive** enters the site at the junction of Wadsworth Street and Long Lane.

The **West Approach Drive** enters the site opposite of West Street on Wadsworth Street.

North Pasture Lane runs east and west between the North Approach Drive and the West Approach Drive.

Ridge Road, which partially was constructed, traverses the ridge line of Long Hill in a north-south direction.

The **Main Approach Drive**, which also partially was constructed, is the direct continuation of the West Approach Drive.

Oak Drive is a continuation of the Main Approach Drive as the visitor gets closer to the main house. Oak Drive is shown with a row of trees on either side.

The **South Approach Drive** provides access from the house south to Randolph Road.

Middle Lane runs in an east-west direction from Dolly Lane near **Middle Lane Pond** to **West Bourne Road**, which runs parallel to Laurel Grove Road. West Bourne Road exists on the present-day site and is bound on the east with a stone wall and a row of Black Walnut trees.

North Lane, a portion of which still exists, runs along the estate's northwestern boundary connecting the West Approach Drive with Laurel Grove Road.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. Outline for a Preservation and Restoration Master Plan
- B. Tasks for Volunteers

X. APPENDICES